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POPULAR REACTIONS TO CHINESE COMMUNIST RULE

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SUMMARY

The Communists have not generally won widespread ideological backing in China, but they have won considerable economic and military support from the majority of the populace; disgruntled landlords and minority religious groups are naturally excluded. Although much of this support has been of a passive nature -- little more than neutrality, in fact -- the Communists have been able to utilize it to advantage. The Communist armies have received the protection from the rear that is necessary in guerrilla warfare, and they have gained in numerical strength and in esprit de corps.

There are, however, several important qualifying factors that must be taken into consideration. First, much of the support that the Communists derive from the people is a negative type of support based upon the Communist economic programs that make Communism preferable to starvation or chaotic economic conditions under the Nationalists. A second and allied factor is the general lack of political consciousness. Political or even economic and social ideologies have little, if any, significance in the attainment of popular support. Support of the mass of the pragmatic Chinese depends upon the concrete economic benefits that the Communist regimes can provide and the psychological incentives that arise from increased popular participation in the control, at local levels, of affairs that directly affect the daily lives of the people.

The Communists have won most of their popular support, passive or otherwise, specifically through the adequate supply of food, the land re-

distribution program, the relatively stable prices and wages (often paid in kind), the self-sufficiency program, the reduction in rents and taxes, the decline in tenancy, and the removal of the oppressive hand of the landlord and usury control over the lives of the people in Communist areas. Through the utilization of the tou cheng ("settling of accounts") technique, whereby the aggrieved poor are permitted to bring charges against their usurers and landlords, pass sentences, and carry out the penalties, the Communists provide an effective release of social pressures at the outset of their control over a newly "liberated" area and thus gain immediate popular support from the poorest elements in the society. At the same time, those who participate in the tou chengs become identified with the new regime and would fear an overturn that would permit refugee landlords and big merchants to return and wreak vengeance upon them.

Popular support in China has been and probably will continue to be dependent to a large extent upon the degree of freedom that the regime in control permits in the life of an individual, his family, his way of life, and his work. In Kalgan and other areas, it is evident that by interfering with the inhabitants' jobs, forcing attendance at propaganda meetings, making children spy upon their parents, and interfering with the practice of Buddhism, Taoism, and other religions, the Communists have aroused considerable opposition.

Rural areas in general seem to have reacted more favorably than urban areas to Communist control, undoubtedly because the Communist economic programs have benefited the peasant farmers to a greater extent than the

urban population. Observers in Shantung and Hopei during 1947 commented that economic standards among peasants were higher in Communist areas than in Nationalist territories. Others mentioned the cooperation between peasants and soldiers. On the other hand, reports up to 1948 indicate that the Communists have lacked skill in handling urban problems. There is recent evidence that the Communists are preparing for the capture and administration of additional cities. It seems evident that, if they want the bulk of the business and government personnel in the cities to remain and support their regime, they will have to administer the cities they capture in the future better than they have administered Kalgan, Chefoo, and Harbin thus far.

The length of Communist occupation of an area and the rapidity with which the Communists have applied their programs have been factors in determining the degree of popular support attained. The Communists' lack of popularity in the Kalgan area during their fourteen months' administration was due in large part to the great rapidity with which they introduced their economic and political programs. The final stage of disillusionment occurred when the Communists retreated from Kalgan; they destroyed large industries, including the power plant, and stripped communication and transportation lines. Since that period the Communists appear to have changed their policies regarding urban areas. Scorched earth tactics have been largely abandoned, although reports indicate that transportation and communication lines are still stripped in war regions. It appears that in Kalgan the Communists were either following a course of expediency or

were experimenting to see how far and with what speed they could carry out their policies. Kalgan may have been a testing or training ground for future programs. It must have revealed to the Communists their lack of trained personnel to administer urban areas.

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POPULAR REACTION TO CHINESE COMMUNIST RULE[1]

I. CHINESE COMMUNIST PROGRAM AND ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

A. Governmental Policies

The Chinese Communists govern through the Communist army, the Communist Party, and local civilians. The general procedure followed by the Communists when entering an area is to turn over the governing processes to a Political Commissar, who is affiliated with the army. This official works with a small cadre of Communist members in establishing local governments and procuring the services of local citizens.

An elective system is in force through the different levels of administration: the village assemblies, the hsien congresses, and the border region congress. However, the Communists regulate the party government, the district cadres, the border region government, and the central committee of the party[2] through their appointive system. Communist organs actually control the government, manipulate the so-called "people's assemblies," and arrange the village tou cheng[3] ("settling of accounts") sessions by which the people are stirred up to take action against landlords.

1. Sources for this report include newspaper correspondents, with varying political sympathies; missionaries (Catholic and Protestant); relief groups (UNRRA and non-sectarian religious groups); refugees from Communist areas; and merchants and other travellers. Support among the students is not discussed in this report because of lack of information regarding student activities.
2. John Hersey, "Communization of Crow Village," The New Yorker, July 27, 1946; REF 055.1/AE 3901, "The Communist Border Area Elective System," February 1946, pp. 91-99, UNCLASSIFIED.
3. Tou cheng is sometimes translated as "class struggle". The term ching suan actually means "clearing the accounts." In practice, however, the terms are used interchangeably.

traitors, and other alleged oppressors of the people. The Communists remain in the background but in reality retain control.

The elective system instituted by the Communists, called the three-three system, provides that one-third of the elected group shall be Communist Party members; one-third shall be Kuomintang members; and, one-third shall be non-party representatives of the people.[1] The people seem, therefore, to be given an opportunity for considerable participation. However, as was demonstrated in Shantung in June 1947, the Communists can be sure of control of a province if they can place ten members in every village.[2]

The Communist election system appears to allow for the participation of other parties, including the liberal elements in the Kuomintang.[3] The Communists may be anxious to obtain the support of the estimated 800,000 members of the Kuomintang who are bureaucrats and teachers. From the methods applied in areas under Communist control, however, it appears that the three-three system does not provide for effective coalition governments.

Reports of election procedures in the Communist areas of Hopei and Jehol in 1946 indicated clearly that these elections were strictly one-party affairs. By skillfully publicizing their own candidates the Communists

1. DX-1375, October 11, 1945, SECRET.
2. REF-355.951/AE 3896, June 25, 1947, CONFIDENTIAL.
3. Yenan broadcast for week of April 12, 1946, commenting on elections for county congress representatives, reported that Fenyang county in the Suiyuan-Shansi area elected 48 non-partisans, 26 Communists, 6 Kuomintang members, and 5 members of the National Salvation Sacrifice League. These included "seven landlords, seven merchants, nine rich peasants, twenty-five middle peasants, sixteen poor peasants, five shop employees, ten intellectuals and six women." (T-678, Chungking, April 13, 1946, RESTRICTED)

were practically assured of a victory in the politically apathetic rural regions. The innovation of election procedures, the fact that there was interest in gaining land from the land division program of the Communists, and the fear of retribution were all factors that aided the Communists to gain political control.[1]

More recent reports also indicate that Kuomintang party members do not participate in governing bodies in Communist areas. Anna Louise Strong, an American leftist writer and Communist sympathizer who visited Dairen in September 1947, put the question of representation to the president of the Kwantung Peninsular Government, Ch'ih Tzu-hsiang, who had been a local businessman. Asked whether he considered that they had reached democracy, he replied: "Of course not... When we get a registration of citizens completed, we shall have a true election."[2] In regard to the participation of other parties in the government, which the Russians in Manchuria have referred to as the government of the "People's Representatives," Ch'ih remarked that possibly the other groups would not participate in view of the international situation. Then he explained that they could elect their representatives through their "trade, and professional associations." The former American Consul at Dairen in the summer of 1947 mentioned the behind-the-scenes manipulations by which the Russians maintained final control over the numerous unions and people's organizations.[3] A merchant from Dairen

1. A-66307, February 4, 1946, CONFIDENTIAL.
2. D-321, Shanghai, October 20, 1947, RESTRICTED.
3. Interview, summer 1947, Washington.

said that the city was run by a Soviet commissar and indirectly administered by the mayor.[1]

B. Agrarian Policies

On May 4, 1946 the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party issued a directive establishing an egalitarian land redistribution program. The new Chinese Communist agrarian law of October 10, 1947 established the policy of equal distribution on a family or household basis. Mao Tse-tung on December 25, 1947 termed this a change from "the policy of reducing rents and interests to one of confiscating the lands of the landlord class and distributing them to the peasants." He pointed out, however, that, although the landlords were not to be given more land than the peasants, this policy did not mark a return to the 1931 and 1934 policy of "distribute no land to the landlords, and poor land to the rich peasants." Mao stressed the basic tenets to be observed in the application of agrarian reform as follows:

> "...Two basic principles must be noted here: firstly it is necessary to satisfy the demands of the poor peasants and farm labors -- this is the most basic task of agrarian reform. Secondly it is necessary to resolutely unite the middle peasants and not injure the interests of the middle peasants....
>
> "The entire party must understand that the thorough reform of the agrarian system is the basic task of the present stage of the Chinese revolution. If we can universally and thoroughly solve the agrarian question, we will have obtained the most basic condition required for conquering all enemies...."[2]

From Mao's speech and reports of land redistribution policies applied in Chinese Communist areas, it is evident that the Communists have changed

1. D-64, Mudken, December 23, 1947, RESTRICTED.
2. Chinese Press Review, citing New China News Agency, January 1, 1948; also FBIB, Daily Report, (FE), January 5, 1948.

their agrarian policies when expediency has dictated. During the united front period (1937-45) the Communists dropped the previous confiscation policy (except for land held by "traitors") and instituted the policy of reduction of rents and taxes. After VJ-day the Communists took over many formerly Japanese-occupied towns and areas. There, as a means of procuring popular support, they started the tou chengs to seek settlement for injustices committed during the war by Japanese, puppets, traitors, and employers.

Although reports regarding the details of the tou chengs are fragmentary, information available indicates that the Communist political workers instigated these meetings and then usually left the proceedings to the people. After the alleged injustices had been declared, sentences were established; if the fines could not be met, the accused person's land was often redistributed or he was forced to sell some of his property to meet his debts. This technique provided for a limited degree of land redistribution without confiscation. However, the people are reported on some occasions to have taken extreme action such as stoning the accused to death or dragging him through the streets.

C. Industrial and Commercial Policies

In a speech on the "Present Situation and Our Tasks" on December 25, 1947, Mao Tse-tung reiterated the major Chinese Communist economic policies. He also emphasized the party policies concerning the petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie in the democratic revolution. In concluding his

statements on economic platforms, he stressed the following points:

> "...To sum up, the economic structure of new China is: (1) state economy -- this is the leading element; (2) agricultural economy developing step by step from and individual towards a collective one; (3) the economy of independent, small industrial and commercial businessmen and the economy of small and middle private capital -- these are the entire national economy of the new democracy. The guiding principle of the national economy of the new democracy, for its part must closely pursue the general objective of developing production, a flourishing economy, taking into account both public and private interests and benefits to both labor and capital. All principles, policies and methods which deviate from this general objective are erroneous...."[1]

The announcement of this policy appears to have been an ex post facto declaration, enunciating for propaganda purposes policies that had already been promulgated in Communist areas of both Manchuria and China. Reports from Kalgan, occupied from August 1945 to October 1946, indicate that the Communists established state-controlled cooperatives there that competed with private business. They tolerated the existence of private industry, however, particularly those industries that were willing to do business with them, and even encouraged merchants to trade with Nationalist areas in order to rejuvenate local business.

D. Military Policies

Foreign missionaries, correspondents, and Chinese travellers have commented on the Communist forces' high morale, discipline, concern for learning, and respectful treatment of women. In both North China and Manchuria the Communists have followed a general policy of equality among the ranks, a policy non-existent among Nationalist forces. The institution

1. Chinese Press Review, citing New China News Agency, January 1, 1948.

of the "little teacher" system of education among the troops (an informal system whereby certain members of the troops instruct other members) is another policy followed by most Communist forces.[1] In Manchuria the Communists recruited local troops; four-fifths of the total Communist forces in Manchuria are native northeasterners, effectively controlled by the remaining one-fifth Communist force.[2] In various areas of North China and Manchuria the Communists have employed soldiers in a work program that enables them to assist the farmers in tilling the land or in performing other jobs.[3]

Although the Communists theoretically do not follow a program of enforced conscription, evidence from several areas indicates that the Communists have acquired recruits by moral pressure.[4] They rely on the people's militia as well as the regular troops for carrying out guerrilla warfare. Through their political cadres,[5] working in the villages and with the armies, they indoctrinate the peasants and soldiers. In addition, the Communists give their troops good treatment and usually supply their material wants, although pay is negligible. They have used minority groups, such as the Mongols and the Koreans, in intelligence units as well as in the army. The Communists have generally followed a policy of good treatment of Nationalist prisoners.

1. China Weekly Review, May 16, 1946, p. 251.
2. D-17, Mukden, June 4, 1947, p. 19, CONFIDENTIAL.
3. REF-951.8/8 4529, July 3, 1947, CONFIDENTIAL.
4. DX-1094, December 3, 1947, RESTRICTED.
5. For discussion of political armies, see OIR-1346.115 and 1346.116, July 16, 1945 and July 23, 1945, CONFIDENTIAL/US Officials Only.

E. Education

Education and training programs have been an integral part of Communist policies. From the days of Yenan, where they established a university, a medical school, a training center for Japanese prisoners of war, and a model prison, the Communists have maintained their interest in education. Information on present Chinese Communist educational methods is fragmentary, but it is evident that the Communists organize communities into classes adapted to the special interests or occupations of the particular trainees. Communist political thought is amply sprinkled throughout; lectures on "democracy" and "Marxism" are vehicles for propaganda against Chiang K'ai-shek and American "imperialism". In some areas it has been evident that these Communist educational methods have received little support.

In general, Communist education has appeared to be both political and military. Even small children are given an education that includes instruction in the military defense of their own community. A former Communist school at An-tung, Manchuria, reportedly was divided into two sections: the first section was to give the students instructions in the inauguration of class struggle; the second, to teach the students for administrative or executive positions in Communist areas.[1] In December 1946 it was reported that the Communist Northeast Military and Political Academy at Lung-chiang (Tsitsihar) had an enrollment of 1,100 students between the ages of 18 and 25. The three-month course at the school,

1. DX-1540, November 22, 1946, RESTRICTED.

taught by former Eighth Route Army members, included history, social science, economics, political systems, and the history of imperialism. From this school the students were sent to a larger school; one of these was located at Pei-an, Manchuria, which has a three-year period of study. The students were then believed to be assigned jobs by the Communists.[1]

F. Religion

Communist statements in regard to religious beliefs are very different from Communist practice. Statements by Chinese Communist leaders imply toleration for various religious groups, but an examination usually reveals that religious toleration is dependent upon the observance of Chinese Communist "laws." Frequently these "laws" are directly opposed to the beliefs and practices of religious groups.

II. POPULAR REACTION IN RURAL AREAS

As clearly as can be ascertained, popular reaction to Communist control in both North China and Manchuria has been more favorable in rural regions than in urban areas. Favorable comments have been elicited by Communist agrarian measures, the good conduct of the army, respectful treatment of women, and the participation in government and other group organizations accorded the peasants.[2] There has, however, been some opposition particularly to the application of the tou cheng and enforced attendance at propaganda lectures and education and political training courses. Religious groups, both Catholic and Protestant, have generally commented

1. REF-355.9516/M 2987, December 17, 1946, UNCLASSIFIED.
2. REF-951.8/8 4529, June 25, 1947, CONFIDENTIAL.

unfavorably on the treatment accorded them, as well as the lack of the "freedom" and "democracy" that the Communists have proclaimed.

A. Land Redistribution Programs

Popular acceptance of Communist redistribution of land has varied in North China and Manchuria. A reporter for the Chicago Sun, travelling in Communist southern Hopei, western Shantung, and northern Honan in the spring of 1947 noted that, according to the Communist plan, each individual in a family was to own seven mou of cultivable land.[1] The reporter said that the plan actually was not practicable, but that land division was carried out and the poorer peasants appeared satisfied. Former rich landowners naturally were very critical of the Communist redistribution, but the correspondent reported that this group seemed to have sufficient land to supply them with adequate production. Information from the Kalgan rural areas indicated that land was broken into small lots, which were usually given to the peasants who had tilled them. The divisions of land there varied according to the productivity of the soil, from ½ mou of rich land to 10 mou of poor land per person.[2] There was dissatisfaction in Kalgan because any production above the stipulated amount was to go to the state and because favoritism was shown to Communist Party officials, especially the political workers, or kan pu.

No details are available on the land division program in Manchuria, but reports indicate that land division was carried out there with much the

1. D-28, Pei-p'ing, April 9, 1947, CONFIDENTIAL. Six mou equals one acre.
2. D-29, Pei-p'ing, August 20, 1947, pp. 29-30, CONFIDENTIAL.

same reactions as in North China. Former rich landlords were naturally antagonistic.[1] There was some dissatisfaction in Manchuria because the poorer farmers were not equipped to handle an increased acreage.[2] On the other hand, a Kuomintang northeastern official said that he had received reports from former students who had travelled in Communist areas indicating production was at a relatively high level. An UNRRA official reported that the Communist land reforms were fairly popular. An educated Chinese who interviewed refugees from Harbin and Hsian reported in September 1947 that the Communist land reform had been successfully completed by the Fifth Offensive of May 1947.[3] A Kuomintang official reported that the Communists had begun to lower rents and were cutting down on the redistribution of land. Ih many cases, he said poor farmers had returned as tenants on the land, but were paying lower rents.[4] Another report indicated that in some areas the Communists had entirely stopped confiscating or redistributing the land of wealthy landowners.[5] One reason for this might be the fact that in Manchuria the extensive Japanese holdings were initially distributed by the Communists to the poorer peasants who were unable to work more land than they originally held.

B. Taxation

There has been a divergence of opinion on Communist taxation policies. Correspondents in North China during the spring of 1947 reported that the

1. D-17, Mukden, June 4, 1947, SECRET.
2. Ibid.
3. T-247, Mukden, September 8, 1947, CONFIDENTIAL.
4. D-17, Mukden, June 4, 1947, p. 6, SECRET.
5. D-29, Mukden, July 14, 1947, CONFIDENTIAL.

who had been in Ying-k'ow, Liaoning, while saying that it was difficult to generalise about Communist reforms, reported that he was impressed by the manner in which the Communist Commissioner kept the peasants busy repairing roads or accomplishing other practical jobs, and that the peasants appeared well fed and satisfied. The main opposition he noted was from the former rich landowners who had suffered losses in the Communist land redistribution program.[1]

D. Military Forces

According to most observers, the morale of the Communist military forces in the rural regions is very high and their relations with the peasants are good.[2] Although there has generally not been an enforced conscription, various observers have noted an intensified pressure to volunteer for the Communist forces. The work program, which enables the soldiers to assist the villagers, has naturally brought favorable comment from some quarters. Some correspondents who have travelled in Communist areas have contrasted the cordial relations between the Chinese Communist military forces and the peasantry with the average peasant's fear of the Nationalist forces. An Australian correspondent who lived seven months in Communist Shantung said that the Communist soldiers treated the people with respect and paid for their purchases.[3]

Other reports seem to indicate a more unfavorable reception of the Communist military forces. An American correspondent who returned in October 1947 from a trip in southern Hopei observed an increased fear of the Communists among the people.[4] The Australian correspondent mentioned

1. D-17, Mukden, June 4, 1947, pp. 4-5, SECRET.
2. D-270, Shanghai, August 5, 1947, p. 2, SECRET.
3. DX-1094, December 3, 1947, RESTRICTED.
4. A-227, Nanking, November 3, 1947, CONFIDENTIAL.

above noted that he had been told not to enter into political discussions with the soldiers, as he had when he heard obvious propaganda presented to the soldiers as fact.[1]

The Communist occupation of Manchuria seems to have proceeded smoothly. The fact that some of the local troops have been recruited from former bandit bands might seem to forecast difficulties, but reports have not so far revealed any large-scale problems.

E. Education and Religion

In general, peasant reaction to Communist religious and educational practices has not been favorable. The interference with family life and with both Christian and Buddhist religious functions has been the primary factor in creating antagonism among the peasantry.

Noteworthy among the educational practices of the Communists have been the utilization of the "little teacher" system for the troops and the establishment of numerous group organizations. These practices have fostered broader participation in education among youths, women, and farmers than has been usual in the traditional Chinese village community. It was undoubtedly this aspect of the Chinese Communist educational program that provoked favorable comment from some foreign reporters who visited Yenan in 1944. Two factors should be borne in mind, however. First, Yenan was an experimentation center, the headquarters of the party organization, and the community in North China that the Communists had occupied for the longest time (eleven years). Second, these reporters arrived in Yenan from the war-weary atmosphere of Chungking, China's wartime capital.

1. IR-1094, December 3, 1947, RESTRICTED.

As mentioned previously, the officially announced policy of the Communists toward religion has differed from their actual practice. Theoretically, the Communists have declared religious toleration for those who observe Communist laws. Catholic, Protestants, and Buddhists have, however, all reported instances of Communist intolerance, ranging from forced attendance at propaganda indoctrination courses to beatings, imprisonment, torture, and killings.[1] These groups have suffered from the tou chengs. Buddhists have reported looting of temples and conscription of some of their younger priests. In some areas in which there was no direct maltreatment of Christian laymen or missionaries or other religious groups, the Communists employed indirect methods that eventually achieved the same results. In only a few cases has favorable treatment been reported, notably by some medical missionaries in Tsanghsien, Hopei and some religious relief teams who operated in Communist areas.[2]

III. POPULAR REACTION IN URBAN AREAS

Conditions in Kalgan and Harbin, and to a lesser extent Chefoo, seem to substantiate the conclusion that the Chinese Communists' programs, have in general, proved more popular in rural areas, including villages, than they have in urban centers.

During the early months of this year (1948), however, the Communists reportedly began to revise their urban programs. There is evidence that the

1. Detailed statistics regarding Communist treatment of Protestant missions are not available. Catholic authorities have reported the following treatment of Catholic properties: 123 churches changed into movie theaters; 25 churches completely destroyed; 166 churches looted; 183 churches occupied by Communist organizations; 88 mission stations destroyed; 216 mission stations occupied and 245 looted; 12 schools burned; and 1,071 schools closed. (John Goette, "Christian China Our Ally," China Monthly, March 1948, pp. 88-89)
2. For further information on Communist treatment of religious groups, see OIR-4657, Religious Intolerance in Communist China, April 9, 1948, SECRET/ US Officials Only.

Communists have organized training programs for potential Communist city administrators.[1] There have also been Communist moves to stabilize conditions in the urban areas so that skilled workers and businessmen will not leave in the event of Chinese Communist occupation of the cities now under Nationalist control. Information from such areas as Lo-yang,[2] Shih-chia-chuang,[3] and Harbin,[4] where these programs are reported to have been inaugurated, has been almost wholly limited to Communist sources; at this time, therefore, it is difficult to ascertain the degree of support that the Communists have won. It appears, however, from these reports, as well as from Mao Tse-tung's speech of December 25, 1947, that the Communists have felt that changes were essential to gain more popular support for their programs.[5]

A. Chefoo

Information regarding the Communist occupation of Chefoo from August 1945 to September 30, 1947 is fragmentary. Although reports received during the occupation indicated that economic conditions were not good, the orderly method in which the Communists evacuated the city, without destroying industrial installations, made a favorable impression upon the inhabitants.[6] When the Communists left, they promised to return in a few months and warned the people not to do anything that would be detrimental to the Communist cause. This method differed from the technique applied in Kalgan.[7] Evidently in Chefoo the Communists either were determined

1. A-22, Tientsin, December 4, 1947, p. 6, CONFIDENTIAL.
2. North China News Agency, March 21, 1948, from Honan-Shensi-Hupeh front, March 15, 1948.
3. FBIB, Daily Report, January 28, 1948, pp. CCC 1 and 2.
4. Ibid., April 7, 1948, pp. CCC 1 and 2; New China News Agency, March 21, 1948.
5. FBIB, Daily Report, January 5, 1948, pp. PPP 4-7.
6. D-66, Tsingtao, October 27, 1947, RESTRICTED.
7. See III, B, below.

to maintain good relations with the populace or were actually anticipating a return for which the destruction of industry would be a short-sighted policy.

From the few reports available, it appears that the Communists in Chefoo did not, however, win a large measure of approval from the people as a whole, although, as in other areas, the position of women was raised and the behavior of the army was good.[1] One report concluded that 90 percent of the people were waiting for the return of the Nationalist Government, since they were sure poverty would continue under the Communists.

1. Economic Conditions. Under the Chinese Communists, Chefoo maintained limited industry and trade. An indication of economic conditions is the fact that the Communist Municipal Government tried to encourage businessmen to go to Tsingtao, carry on trade, and return with their wealth to Chefoo.[2] The Communists, in outlining their policies in April 1946, announced that they were interested in making Chefoo into an international seaport that would carry on trade with Americans and other foreigners as long as the people were not exploited.[3] However, at least until the summer of 1947, when Soviet ships visited Chefoo, there was no foreign trade.[4]

The Communists did not fulfill their promises in other economic fields either. There apparently was no fixed policy for taxation in Chefoo. One report indicated that the Communists levied taxes on the people whenever they needed money.[5] In addition to the lack of international

1. D-69, Tsingtao, December 29, 1947, SECRET.
2. REF-095/Z 1801/ May 26, 1947, SECRET.
3. DX- YV 1573, April 1946 information, May 9, 1946, CONFIDENTIAL.
4. DRF, China Branch, Files, SECRET.
5. DX YV 1573, May 9, 1946, CONFIDENTIAL.

peasants seemed satisfied with the collection of one tax for each class of people, that is, one tax on merchants' sales and one tax on farmers' crops.[1] An Australian newspaperman who lived in Communist areas in the spring and summer of 1947 reported that the Communist economic reforms were popular with roughly 60 percent of the peasants.[2] An UNRRA official also reported that the Communist land reforms were fairly popular, partly because taxes were collected in kind rather than in currency. In the Kalgan area, however, information derived after the departure of the Communists indicated general dissatisfaction with the Communist policy of designating 1⅓ mou of non-irrigated land and two-thirds of a mou of irrigated land per person as tax-free and collecting all production from land over this amount as taxes. A foreign service officer discovered one case in which a five-member family, with 17 mou of land, worked 7½ mou tax-free but surrendered all production from the remaining 9⅓ mou for taxes.[3]

C. Agrarian Organizations

Other agrarian programs of the Chinese Communists seem to have created some popular support. An American correspondent who travelled in Communist areas of Shantung during 1947 commented on the formation of labor or agricultural unions. He said that the Communists had instituted collective farming around Chang-oh'iu, Shantung, and that the farmers lent each other farm implements and assisted each other in the harvesting of crops.[4] He reported that the Chinese farmers were interested in the Communist programs of learning to work together to handle local problems. The agricultural schools in various areas of Manchuria as well as North China also evoked some favorable comment.[5] An American military official

1. D-23, Pei-p'ing, April 9, 1947, CONFIDENTIAL.
2. DX-1094, December 3, 1947, RESTRICTED.
3. D-29, Pei-p'ing, August 20, 1947, pp. 29-30, CONFIDENTIAL.
4. Christian Science Monitor, April 5, 1947.
5. D-17, Mukden, June 4, 1947, SECRET.

trade. Chefoo suffered from a lack of domestic trade and from shortages of consumers' goods. As a consequence, most people of wealth left the city, particularly since any who remained were usually taxed heavily to support the rest of the populace.[1] Tou chengs were also employed in Chefoo, although generally with less severity than in some other areas.[2]

Some of the economic measures of the Communists, however, caused favorable reactions. Prices were controlled and generally stabilized in Chefoo.[3] A few groups of workers, including wharf workers, benefited economically. Although most of the inhabitants suffered economic hardships, there was no evidence of starvation.[4]

2. Education and Propaganda. The Communist courses of indoctrination including long lectures on "democracy" and "Marxism",[5] were given to both Chinese and foreigners. They were started early in the Communist occupation of Chefoo.[6] Information received from the area during the occupation indicated general dissatisfaction with the propaganda directed to the people, because it was reported to be of such nature that no educated person could possibly swallow it. The Communists evidently attempted to teach different groups in different types of schools. Since the Nationalist occupation of October 1, 1947, there have been no reports concerning the effect of Communist propaganda on the Chinese citizens of Chefoo.

1. REF-330.931/AE 4133, February 19, 1947, SECRET.
2. D-69, Tsingtao, December 29, 1947, SECRET.
3. REF-330.931/AE 4133, February 19, 1947, SECRET.
4. DRF, China Branch, Files, April 22, 1947, SECRET.
5. RFF-330.931/AE 4133, February 19, 1947, SECRET.
6. DX-A- 64046, November 25, 1945, December 10, 1945, CONFIDENTIAL.

B. Kalgan

The Chinese Communist occupation of Kalgan following the Japanese surrender generally failed to win popular support.[1] This conclusion is based on reports received during the fourteen-month occupation and following the evacuation of this area by the Communists on October 10, 1946.

At first the Chinese Communists appeared to be working for popular support. They proclaimed numerous economic policies that sounded beneficial to the people. They promised free trade; said that they welcomed both public and private enterprises; and announced that they were going to develop industries and handicraft shops, establish price control, loan money at low interest rates, and reduce taxes. In addition, they declared that they were inaugurating an eight-hour or ten-hour day and were planning to increase benefits for both management and labor.[2]

Apparently they pushed their programs too far and too fast. The culminating blow to even those workers who had benefited economically was the destruction by the Communists of some of the large industries, including power plants, and the stripping of communications and transportation lines as they retreated from Kalgan.

In other fields the Communists made similar promises. Government administration was to function according to the Chinese Communist Party three-three system , whereby the Communists would only control one-third of the seats.[3] Education was to be more widespread. Better health facilities were to be provided. There was to be no unemployment. Physical features of the city, such as roads, were to be improved.

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1. Information in this section is drawn largely from D-29, Pei-p'ing, August 30, 1947, CONFIDENTIAL.
2. DX- A-69345, April 4, 1946, RESTRICTED.
3. See I, A, above.

At first it seemed that the Communists were attempting to carry out these promises and improve the government of Kalgan. Life was easier in Kalgan than in rural areas. For the first six months of Communist occupation, Kalgan was the first captured showpiece for foreigners. Tou chengs were not carried out during this period. Conscription was not instituted in the city, although there is evidence that there was pressure to encourage "voluntary" enlistments.

The relative leniency of the early period was, however, short-lived. The tou cheng system was put into effect in both city and countryside. The people became aware of listening agents and of the work of the political cadre, or kan pu.

Imprisonment of people who were affiliated with Kuomintang groups, or considered otherwise dangerous became more frequent. Dangerous prisoners were often kept in solitary confinement. In some cases, such prisoners were executed or simply disappeared.

1. Effect upon Traditional Chinese Life. The inhabitants of Kalgan were disturbed by the Communists' attitude toward the family -- fundamental unit of Chinese life. They could not understand the Communists' instigations of family quarrels, nor their approval of divorce. Similarly, the use of children as spies against their parents was appalling in a country where, for centuries, filial piety had been stressed. The Communists also kept the children so busy with classes, parades, and other functions that they were not available for family chores or to work in the fields. Buddhist and Taoist priests were unanimous in their dislike of Communism because of

its disruptive influence on Chinese family life and because its ideologies and propaganda were so contrary to the concept of "speaking reason."

2. Training Programs. Communist propaganda training programs were generally disliked. The Communists required all types of people to attend these daily meetings. The meetings were reported to consist of 20 percent Communist dogma, 30 percent practical business, which might include the tou cheng, and 50 percent straight propaganda, including denouncements of American capitalism.

3. Behavior of Communist Troops. Popular opinion regarding the general behavior of the Communist troops toward the inhabitants of the city was favorable. The people were impressed by the discipline of the Communists and were unanimous in their appraisal of the extreme loyalty of the Chinese Communist members. In certain other respects, however, the people did not approve of the actions of the military. For example, they criticized the soldiers for being unChinese in speech or manner.

4. General Economic Conditions. Although the Chinese Communists raised wages of workers when they first entered Kalgan, the general opinion was that the Communist policies were not beneficial to the people. There was some criticism of the raising of wages of coolies, which made it impossible to hire them. Rickshs pullers strongly denounced the Communists for interfering with their work by intimidating riders and causing rickshs pullers to waste time at meetings.

Other workers objected to the Communists for other reasons. Some laborers interviewed by a Pei-p'ing consular official complained that the Communists said they were going to help the comman man but instead gave their own party members preferential treatment. A railroad employee claimed that party members received twice as much food as he did. A cigarette worker said that workers in his plant were told how to spend their money.[1] Workers in a flour mill, however, reported that their wages were higher.

Most of the merchants disliked the Communists for their interference with business. Owners reported that they were told how many workers they should hire or told to raise wages. Another grievance was the competition from Communist cooperatives. Merchants complained that, although the Communists shouted for free trade, they obviously did not allow it to function.

A wealthy flour mill owner, who would normally be expected to be strongly anti-Communist, mentioned several economic measures he felt were favorable. He said there was general agreement that the Communists raised wages of some factory workers, although he pointed out that workers in small shops did not benefit. He further emphasized that although the Communists were efficient, they lacked technical knowledge.[2]

5. Prices. UNRRA observers in Shansi, Chahar, and Suiyuan during the spring of 1946 noted that prices in Communist areas were generally controlled and were usually lower than those in Nationalist areas. They reported that currency in Communist areas fluctuated with the price of commodities.

1. D-4, Pei-p'ing, December 9, 1946, CONFIDENTIAL.
2. Ibid.

The Communist stress on production of necessities was according to these observers, one factor in the maintenance of relatively low prices.[1] Another factor, according to a flour mill owner in Kalgan, was the Communist practice of selling in government cooperatives.[2]

6. Taxation Policies. The general opinion with regard to the taxation policy of the Communists was that, although the Communists collected just one tax, it was quite high for all but the very poorest of the population. The Communists sent around tax inspectors to calculate the income of each family; they estimated the total cost of living expenses, and then figured the rate of taxation by whatever remained. No one dared to falsify his statements because of the severe consequences if he were caught; neighbors and friends were required to report any know irregularities.

C. Harbin

Accounts of conditions in Harbin, which the Communists entered on April 6, 1946,[3] vary greatly. Anna Louise Strong, well known as a Communist sympathizer, wrote enthusiastically of her visit to Harbin in the fall of 1946.[4] Reports from a former Embassy clerk in Harbin and from refugees and truce team members, however, indicate that, although Communist control is strong, administration of Harbin up to 1948 was bad both economically and politically, and the Communists generally failed to gain popular support for their regime. A Communist broadcast from Manchuria on April 6, 1948 disclosed that the Communists had recognized this situation and had initiated

1. UNRRA field report, Shansi-Suiyuan-Chahar, March 1946, CONFIDENTIAL.
2. D-4, Pei-p'ing, December 9, 1946, CONFIDENTIAL.
3. New York Times, April 6, 1946.
4. Anna Louise Strong, "Communist Regime in Manchuria," Amerasia, May 1947, p. 139.

steps to remedy it. The broadcast said:

> "After the Harbin Municipal Government announced the policy of protecting industry and commerce on January 27, and the registration of industry and commerce in February, trade prospered in the city."[1]

1. General Economic Conditions. A former Embassy clerk who left Harbin in June 1947[2] reported that there was almost no large-scale business there. The British-American Tobacco Company and Liddell Brothers were the only large foreign firms in operation. Little trade was carried on by the Chinese except by smuggling. Information as late as November 1947 stated that wealthy merchants had almost entirely disappeared and that business was carried out by small shops or cooperatives.[3]

Industrial output also seems to have been limited. The former Embassy clerk reported that output was limited to military equipment and such necessities as salt, cloth, and fuel. According to a report of November 1947, residents of Harbin were dependent upon the USSR for manufactured goods. The former White Russian firm of Tsohurin had an almost complete monopoly in the handling of Soviet products. This company was also actively running beer and paper factories and dairies. This information seems to confirm the Communists' modification of policies to promote production and to stimulate popular confidence in the party.[4]

Financial conditions in Harbin have also been reported to be unfavorable. One report indicated that currency was printed as it was

1. FBIB, Daily Report, April 7, 1948, pp. CCC1-2, UNRESTRICTED.
2. D-73, Ch'ang-ch'un, July 1, 1947, RESTRICTED; D-77, Ch'ang-ch'un, July 15, 1947, RESTRICTED; D-78, July 15, 1947, Ch'ang-ch'un, RESTRICTED.
3. D-2, Ch'ang-ch'un, January 14, 1948, CONFIDENTIAL.
4. FBIB, Daily Report, April 7, 1948, pp. CCC 1-2, UNCLASSIFIED.

needed without any official backing. Although both reports declared that the Communist cooperatives were aimed at the reduction of prices, both reported inflation. The rate of inflation between June and November 1947 ran from 100 to 200 percent. Wages were described as generally low, but government officials reportedly received free allotments of coal and grain in addition to their salaries.[1]

The Communist method of taxation, as reported by the former Embassy clerk, was harmful to small business. There were no direct taxes at first; the Communists asked for payment of taxes from businessmen on their stocks on hand — before the sale of the goods. Frequently these taxes would amount to 6 percent; this method naturally did not encourage business. The Communist broadcast from Manchuria mentioned above, said that business had expanded as a result of the new Harbin policies, and announced the following policy to aid commerce and trade:

> "Vice Chairman Yao of Harbin city said, 'To intensively help the development of industry and commerce, the municipal government has planned to allot 300 million yuan for loans to industrial and commercial firms. This sum is equivalent to 15 billion Chiang yuan.' ..."[2]

This source listed as most successful: "metal works, leather works, fur works, printing, and electrical supplies."[3]

2. Transportation and Utilities. The operation of transportation, communications, and utilities furnished other examples of mismanagement.

1. D-2, CH'ang-ch'un, January 14, 1948, CONFIDENTIAL.
2. FBIB, Daily Report, April 7, 1948, pp. CCC 1-2, UNCLASSIFIED.
3. Ibid.

A report of June 1947 indicated that streetcar service was fair and there were some privately owned taxis run by Russians and Chinese. Electricity, generated from the local power station, was insufficient. Postal service was reported to be practically non-existent in June, although later information indicated that there was postal and telegraphic service with the USSR.

3. Administration. In November 1947 it was reported that Harbin was run by a council of six, which was probably elected or appointed by the Eighth Route Army (now called the Northeast Liberation Army).[1] Directives of the Council were reported to be so contradictory that people did not know whether they were obeying the law or not. The government, according to the former Acting Danish Consul General, was directed by the strong arm of Li Li-san, but was "carried on by momentum."[2] It was reported in September 1947 that a strong secret police force had been created and that the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association indirectly wielded considerable Soviet influence in the administration of the city.[3]

As of November 1947, there were no guarantees of freedom of speech, press, or assembly. Student opposition to the projection of Communist propaganda into the educational system was reported. Educated people were said to be opposed to the Communist regime, but in general they were silent because of fear of reprisals. An intensification of Marxist propaganda in

1. Lin Piao, Li Li-san, and P'eng Chen were the leading Communist officials in Harbin at the time of November 1947 report.
2. D-5, Pei-p'ing, December 21, 1946. CONFIDENTIAL.
3. DX-10218, December 8, 1947, SECRET.

schools, clubs, newspapers, and movies was noted.[1] The press was limited to three Chinese newspapers that supported the Chinese Communists and the Soviet Union.

There was an acute housing shortage; the Communist troops had occupied the best residential sections of Harbin. Moreover, the police force, although reported to be better than most of the other departments of the government, was unable to provide adequate protection for private property, and there were frequent robberies and lootings.

4. Communist Troops. Reports concerning the military administration differ. The former Acting Danish Consul General said that on the whole the troops were well disciplined, conducted themselves admirably, and were well fed.[3] He also noted that there were not enough rifles to go around. An American military observer, however, reported that the troops were not well disciplined and would obey only their company commanders,[4] which he attributed in large part to the fact that they had been recruited locally. Other sources attributed the success of the Communist regime in part to the fact that native Manchurians constituted about four-fifths of the Communist troops in Manchuria. Others have claimed that equality of ranks, considerate treatment, the superior strategy and maneuverability of the Communist troops, and effective propaganda concerning the weaknesses of the Nationalist forces have contributed to the creation of high morale among the Communist armies.[5]

1. D-2, Ch'ang-ch'un, January 14, 1948, CONFIDENTIAL.
2. D-5, Pei-p'ing, December 21, 1946, CONFIDENTIAL.
3. Ibid.
4. Interview, August 22, 1947.
5. D-17, Mukden, June 4, 1947, SECRET.

IV. CONCLUSION

It is apparent that, although the Communists have not generally won widespread ideological backing in China, they have won considerable economic and military support from the majority of the populace; disgruntled landlords and minority religious groups are naturally excluded. Although much of this support has been of a neutral character, the Communists have been able to utilize it to advantage. The Communist armies have received the support from the rear that is a necessity in waging guerrilla warfare; they have increased in numerical strength; and they have gained in esprit de corps. Through the utilization of the tou cheng technique, whereby the aggrieved poor are permitted to bring charges against usurers and landlords, pass sentences, and carry out the penalties, the Communists provide an effective release of social pressures at the outset of their control over a newly "liberated" area and thus gain immediate popular support. At the same time, those who participate in the tou chengs become identified with the new regime and would fear an overturn that would permit refugee landlords and big merchants to return and wreak vengeance upon them.

There are, however, several important qualifying factors that must be taken into consideration. First, much of the support that the Communists derive from the people is a negative type of support based upon the Communist economic programs that make Communism preferable to starvation or chaotic economic conditions under the Nationalists. A second and allied factor is the general lack of political consciousness. Political or even

economic and social ideologies have little, if any, significance in the attainment of popular support. Support of the mass of the pragmatic Chinese depends upon the concrete economic benefits that the Communist regimes can provide and the psychological incentives that arise from increased popular participation (through youth, women's, laborers', and other Communist-sponsored organizations) in the control, at local levels, of affairs that directly affect the daily lives of the people.

Popular support in China, however, has been and probably will continue to be dependent to a large extent upon the degree of freedom that the regime in control permits in the life of an individual, his family, his way of life, and his work. In Kalgan and other areas, it is evident that by interfering with the inhabitants' jobs, forcing attendance at propaganda meetings, making children spy upon their parents, and interfering with the practice of Buddhism, Taoism, and other religions, the Communists have aroused considerable opposition.

Rural areas in general seem to have reacted more favorably than urban areas to Communist control, undoubtedly because the Communist economic programs have benefited the peasant farmers to a greater extent than the urban population. Observers in Shantung and Hopei during 1947 commented that economic standards among peasants were higher in Communist areas than in Nationalist territories. Others mentioned the cooperation between peasants and soldiers. On the other hand, reports up to 1948 indicate that the Communists have lacked skill in handling urban problems.

There is recent evidence that the Communists are preparing for the capture and administration of additional cities. It seems evident that, if they want the bulk of the city business and government personnel to remain and support their regime, they will have to administer the cities they capture in the future better than they have administered Kalgan, Chefoo, and Harbin and will have to accord protection and support to private business enterprise. Their broadcasts in recent months have asserted that they are rapidly restoring order, improving the economy of the cities they now hold, and protecting private enterprise. Evidence is not at present available to prove or disprove these assertions. Even should it prove to be true that the Communists are protecting private enterprises, there is no guarantee that such a policy has not been adopted for purposes of tactical expediency, since their ideology commits them to the ultimate socialization of the means of production.